

Local Agency Conference Call November 7, 2013

Broadwater ✓, Cascade ✓, Custer ✓, Dawson ✓, Deer Lodge ✓, Fergus ✓, Flathead ✓, Gallatin ✓, Hill ✓, Lake ✓, Lewis and Clark ✓, Lincoln ✓, Missoula ✓, Ravalli ✓, RiverStone ✓, Sanders ✓, Sheridan ✓, Silver Bow ✓, Teton ✓, Valley ✓, Fort Peck ✓, Northern Cheyenne ✓, Blackfeet ✓, Crow □, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes □, Fort Belknap □, Rocky Boy □

Present ✓, Absent □

Agenda

Program/Budget Update – Joan

Local agency monitoring for FY2014 is planned to take place between October and March. We have already been to several local agencies this year. The early completion of monitoring visits will allow State staff to be available during the pilot operation of the WIC Card.

The Retailer Unit is conducting compliance buys this fall and winter in local retail outlets and has requested local agencies to perform the routine monitoring visits early as well. This will allow the Retailer Unit to be available during the pilot.

The 2014 WIC State Plan has been approved. There were no major changes and appears as the copy your local agency received at the Fall Training. Your local agency will receive a CD copy, shortly. The 2014 WIC State Plan will be posted to the website in a few days.

We have first quarter funding, hoping that a full year funding agreement will come out of the conference committee or at least a Continuing Resolution for the rest of FY2014. In the Farm Bill are two provisions concerning WIC imbedded in the nutrition title. One provides for a study of the “benefits” of white potatoes on low-income mothers and children and the other is a study of sole-source contracts on nutrition programs. The former is promoted by the potato industry and is yet another vehicle to legislatively push potatoes into the WIC food package, ignoring the science of the Institute of Medicine and its recommendations to exclude white potatoes from the WIC food packages as they are over-consumed by WIC participants. The latter is promoted by the Gerber Division of Nestle in an effort to put an end to competitively bid sole-source contracts affecting infant foods.

M-SPIRIT Release and Training Information – Joan/Leah

We will be releasing a new version of M-SPIRIT on November 18th. It has a lot of changes to it. M-SPIRIT training is next Thursday, November 14th, starting at 8:30am. Please see next week’s newsletter for detailed call-in instructions. This is a Web-Ex training, so you will also need a computer and internet access. Please try to have all of your staff attend this training, but if you

cannot, it will be recorded. We will post this training on the website where you may review the on-line training before the 18th.

WIC Card Project Update – Dick

We are going to call the EBT project, “**WIC Card**”, thus it can be differentiated from the EBT benefits.

We have had some preliminary meetings with JPM. At these meetings we have been working on definitions, expectation and timelines. I’m optimistic about the project and looking forward to the pilot in summer 2014.

Before we can pilot, we have to have the UPC Database working and create some Training materials. For the database, we have to collect the UPC’s and have them in the system before a sale can be made. We are coordinating the gathering of the data, from other states and vendors. A policy is being created for database maintenance and updating.

Before the pilot, training materials on the **WIC Card** will be developed for the State office, Clinic and Participants. JPM will train the vendors.

Special Formula/Medical Foods – Chris/Kate

Kate and I want to clear up any confusion the recent change has made. We are now ordering with a Bureau credit card and some of the process has changed.

- Email requests for special formulas to both Kate (kgirard@mt.gov) and Chris (cfogelman@mt.gov), we will decide who actually orders based on who is in the office.
- Email the confirmation to Mark Squires (msquires2@mt.gov) as well as Kate and Chris. Mark is out of the office for the next month visiting his wife’s family in Thailand. Formula orders are not paid until they are marked received in the State system.
- Be conservative in your ordering, especially for the initial order or for a seldom used product. Start with one month’s worth and then when tolerance and acceptance is okay, you can order in 2-3 month amounts. We would like to keep the stock low to avoid having to ship formulas between clinics (paid out of local program funds) and to have formula go out of date because no one else is using it.
- Email Kate with information about leftover/excess formula, we will track and make attempts to coordinate getting formula to clinics that can use it (no guarantees).
- Ask participants if they are receiving any formula from Medicaid. Some participants may be getting additional formula from Medicaid because the

amount from WIC is not enough. Help the participant determine if changing to Medicaid purchasing all of the formula would be a better option for them. This may be particularly true for infants and children with chronic conditions and who are tube fed.

- During this year, we will be looking at changing to Medicaid being the primary or first party to purchase special formulas and medical foods, rather than WIC. If Medicaid was unable to pay for the items, and WIC is able to pay for them, then we would.

Forms Order – Leah

We are still waiting on forms orders from:

- Dawson
- Deer Lodge
- Lincoln
- Missoula
- Silver Bow
- Crow
- Salish and Kootenai
- Fort Belknap

So we can get everyone's order out as soon as possible, please fax or email your form by close of business today. Mark Squires is out of the office for a month and Linda Stallings is back to fill in for him! Her email is lstallings@mt.gov. You can also email Leah or fax it to 406-444-0239.

Retail Advisory Committee Call

The Retail Advisory Committee conference call is also next Thursday, November 14th, but it starts at 9:00am. Feel free to join after the training call if you would like. We will discuss the UPC database in detail. The call-in information is the same as this conference call.

Abbreviations – Kate

- List was started in Flathead at the request of local agencies at the Spring Meeting, thank you!
- List is a work in progress and feedback is welcome (email Kate)
- Will be posted online under local agency resources/admin forms soon
- You do not HAVE to use it, but become familiar and check your local abbreviations against it
- It will be phased into State Plan and monitoring in the next couple of years

- You may spell out words instead, but if you use an abbreviation, check the list
- This assists everyone in being able to understand the chart (state staff and other agencies)

Nutrition Education Materials – Kate

- Being revised one by one
- Website will be updated with each piece as it is completed
- Please let Kate know if you use a piece of material and would like changes/updates
- It is best, to save money, to have them easily printable from the website (as needed) vs. printing in color from the state

Save the Date for Spring Training – Joan

Save the Date for the Spring Training – April 10th and 11th in Bozeman. Jamie Farr, from aha! Process, Inc., will be presenting “Bridges Out of Poverty: Strategies for Professional and Communities”. She is great. Earlier this year we saw a streaming video of her presentation at the University of Minnesota.

We will have extra space so if others from your departments are interested, they can also register. There will be a registration fee for non-WIC attendees to cover such costs as food and printing.

WIC staff will have to register, but there is no fee for them to attend. Expenses for travel and per diem will have to be paid by the local agency.

If funding is available, we will pay for Fall Training as usual.

Other/Questions

Jackie Cenis announced that she and Teresa Messerman will be holding Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Training on Tuesday November 19, 2013, from 8:30am to 4:00pm at the Hamilton WIC office. If anyone is interested in attending, please call Jackie or Teresa at 406-375-6686 by Thursday, November 14th. There will be a cost for supplies (peer counselor binder, etc) of \$35.00. Lunch will be provided.

Karen Dwyer asked for clarification on the use of the abbreviations. Kate responded that you can write/spell out the words, but if you use an abbreviation, these are the ones that are acceptable.

Drenda Niemann asked when the new State Plan would be posted. Joan responded, so although we can't say exactly when because we rely on DPHHS' Information Technology group to perform the actual posting.

Dawn Baker asked where the Vitamin D nutrition risk code was located. Kate responded that the Vitamin D risk is included as part of two actual codes. They are Inappropriate Infant Feeding (411) and Inappropriate Feeding Practices for Children (425).

Vicky Tusler asked if the Spring Training would be in conjunction with the Montana Public Health Conference. Joan responded that the Family and Community Health Bureau will not be holding a conference in 2014 and the Montana Public Health Association usually meets in September or October.

Updates from November 7th FMNP Discussion with LARCS

Cascade ✓, Dawson ✓, Flathead ✓, Gallatin ✓, Lewis and Clark ✓, Missoula ✓, Ravalli ✓, RiverStone ✓

Present ✓, Absent □

Farm Direct Program Status Update – Glade

As of 11/7 our FMNP redemption amount was \$43,866.08. This means that our redemption is at 87 percent for the year. This is great news. The national average for FMNP programs is around 53 percent. And the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has indicated that ideally a FMNP program would have a redemption percentage that was 83 percent or above.

Our success this year can be attributed to raising our benefit amount from \$18.00 per participant to \$30.00 per participant and our outreach efforts made at the local agency level.

Everyone did an outstanding job in encouraging their participants to get to the farmer's markets to use their benefits!

We are currently in the process of applying for a FMNP grant for next year.

Effects on our Farm Direct Program with our transition to the WIC Card System - Kevin

We are not anticipating any significant changes to how we are running our Farm Direct Program for FY2014. The only possible effect will be that participants in Lewis and Clark County will not be using paper fruit and vegetable benefits at farmers' market. This is because they will be part of our WIC Card pilot project that will be running in their area during the summer of 2014.

Participants in Lewis and Clark County will still be receiving paper FMNP benefits that they can use at farmers' markets. When we fully transition to the WIC Card System we will likely

separate the fruit and vegetable benefit from the program. However, this will not take effect until the FY2015 farmers' market season—a ways down the road.

What Went Well this Year - Glade

During our Farm Direct discussion we discussed what went well and what could have gone better over the last year.

Examples from this conversation included the following:

Gallatin – Had 5 Farmer's Stands at clinic over the course of the summer. Hope to be more organized next year. Participants appreciated not having to go to the market because of pressure to buy other things at the market (baked goods, jewelry, etc.).

Ravalli – Created a new incentive program to cash FNMP and FVB with farmers. Farmers received stickers to put on participants' packets when they cashed either benefit with them. How many stickers they had dictated how times they could enter a drawing for fruit and vegetable related prizes (cutting board, vegetable steamer, knives). Participants got really into bringing their dots in and entering for prizes. They had the drawing at the end of October and advertised who won.

Cascade – Market season went well with the increase to \$30. Participants were excited. They waited until FDTU to distribute benefits so easier to remember to use. Everyone on staff is encouraging. They were more selective about who was issued benefits. Participants were flagged if they did not use FNMP benefits last year and were encouraged to FVB instead.

Flathead – Lots of enthusiasm from staff and clients. They distributed handouts on how to use fruits and vegetables in various ways. This year, they rented a plot with the community garden and had children plant, watch grow and harvest vegetables. This required a lot of volunteer hours.

Missoula – Clients excited for \$30 but maybe too much money for some. Offer FNMP benefits to everyone and encourage them to use. Lots of markets in Missoula at various times so lots of options, which helps redemption. Missoula has a One Call Now texting grant and they used it to send out messages and reminders about farmer's market.

Dawson – Go to farmer's market to issue; find families at the market purchase at a higher rate. They do not distribute until the end of July as the market not really in full swing until then (more variety, more excited). They sent a postcard to people who take benefits to remind to use them. Appreciate the \$30 increase. Found moms would let their kids pick out a veggie they wanted to try.

Lewis and Clark - \$30 was a big hit! Staff did a great job promoting in clinic even before the season started. They distribute benefits at the market. Feedback from participants indicated it was a great solution; Theresa was there to answer questions and help as needed.

RiverStone – Once a week there was an event where participants watched a short presentation and handed out benefits. They have a farmer's market in the parking lot of the health center and handed out benefits there as well. During the first three Saturdays of the main market, they opened in the morning to distribute benefits. Mid-September they did a phone survey to remind participants to use the benefits. Some participants asked "what is a farmer's market and where do I find one?" A good reminder that some participants may not know what a farmer's market is.

Comments from State Staff

- Waiting until the bank account closes on November 30 to do redemption report
- Since we are on a paper based system, the redemption report is a little flawed. It is based on the farmer who redeemed the benefit and not the participant. For example, if Missoula WIC signed up the farmer but the benefit was cashed at a different market, Missoula would still see the redemption.

Questions

If a family takes FNMP benefits and does not cash them, can we re-issue? No, you cannot re-issue.

How does it work for agencies who go to markets to issue? Flathead said they bring a laptop and mi-fi to access M-SPIRIT. If a market has an EBT booth, you could try setting up with them.

If the FNMP benefits have numbers and you know what clinic you issued the benefits to, why isn't redemption based on issuance? The bank cannot handle this as a report so the state would have to hand count, which is not feasible.